



SECRETARY'S COLUMN:

Ready, Set, Produce – What You Need to Know About the Dairy 30x20 Initiative

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EDITOR'S NOTE: The following is a column DATCP Secretary Ben Brancel has written outlining details of Grow Wisconsin Dairy 30x20 and how dairy farmers can take advantage of this new resource. A video of Secretary Brancel talking about this initiative can be found at: <http://youtu.be/hVunyAWEm-4>. It is available for your use in reporting and to link or stream on your web site. If you would like to schedule your own interview with Secretary Brancel, please contact Jim Dick using the information above.

MADISON –The goal of the Grow Wisconsin Dairy 30x20 Initiative is simple: Achieve an annual milk production of 30 billion pounds by 2020 to meet the growing demand of the marketplace and improve the long-term viability of Wisconsin's dairy industry. Governor Scott Walker launched this new initiative at the PDPW 2012 Business Conference March 13th. Now the real work begins.

Why Grow Wisconsin Dairy 30x20

Wisconsin's dairy industry is what it is today because of dedicated dairy farmers across the state. Collectively a milk production record was set in 2011 but barely. Milk production grew less than 1% in 2011 to 26.1 billion pounds. Good, but not good enough to keep us on pace to meet the demands of the state's growing processing industry and our customers around the world. Wisconsin dairy farmers produce approximately 90% of the milk volume needed by the state's dairy processors. We need it to be 100%.

How Dairy 30x20 Can Help

Through Dairy 30x20, DATCP will assist Wisconsin dairy farmers, without regard to size or type, by focusing on long-term, sustained operations. No other state offers the concentration of dairy resources and support network that is available in Wisconsin. Our dairy infrastructure is a leader in offering highly-developed and specialized expertise. But farmers cannot take advantage of these resources if they don't know about them. That will be our job at DATCP, to connect farmers with resources and services.

To get started, dairy farmers should get in touch with the Dairy 30x20 experts by using our new toll-free number, **855-WIDAIRY (855-943-2479)**, or email address, GrowWisconsinDairy@wi.gov. When farmers contact us, they will be asked to describe their operation and type of services required to increase productivity and profitability. Based on those requirements, we can direct a dairy farmer to the best sources of support for things such as transition planning, herd health or financial planning. There are tax credits for farm modernization and for farmers just getting started. In the near future, we'll have details on a grant program that could help increase productivity. Just as each farm in Wisconsin is different, each response will be different.

How Dairy 30x20 Happened

The Dairy 30x20 Initiative is not just another government program. It is a public-private effort that grew out of months of discussions between DATCP staff and dairy industry leaders across the state. When the former Dairy 2020 program transferred to DATCP from the disbanded Wisconsin Department of Commerce, everyone agreed changes needed to be made to ensure a strong future for the state's dairy industry.

Representatives from the Dairy Business Association, Cooperative Network, Professional Dairy Producers of Wisconsin, Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation, Wisconsin Farmers Union, Wisconsin National Farmers Organization, Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association, Wisconsin Dairy Products Association, GrassWorks Inc, UW-Extension, Wisconsin Center for Dairy Research, Wisconsin Center for Dairy Profitability, the Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board and DATCP staff were all involved in discussing the needs and demands of our farmers and processors. The results were clear. We need milk and more of it. To produce that milk, we need to provide services to our state's farmers.

Dairy's Economic Impact

Dairy is truly the cornerstone of Wisconsin's agricultural industry. Economically it means more to Wisconsin than citrus does to Florida, potatoes to Idaho, apples to Washington or lobster to Maine. The dairy industry has a \$26.5 billion impact on Wisconsin's economy and employs more than 146,000 people in the state. Wisconsin is home to over 11,000 licensed dairy herds, and we will need each of them to be productive and profitable to meet the Dairy 30x20 goal set by industry's leaders.

I encourage dairy farmers to contact us today using our new toll-free number, **855-WIDAIRY (855-943-2479)**, or email address, GrowWisconsinDairy@wi.gov.

Our resources and services for dairy farmers will continue to build and be available online at GrowWisconsinDairy.wi.gov.

Wisconsin is America's Dairyland, and we need to keep it that way.

Make the call. Send the email. Dairy farmers will be the ones to meet the goal of the Grow Wisconsin Dairy 30x20 Initiative.

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